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**RENO MAN CHARGED AND ARRESTED FOR  
FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINING UNCLAIMED PROPERTY IN CALIFORNIA**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced that JAMES A. GARNER, 44, of Reno, Nevada, was arrested yesterday by federal, California, and Nevada authorities for defrauding the State of California's Unclaimed Property Program out of approximately \$129,000. The Unclaimed Property Program is a program administered by the California State Controller's Office to collect and hold unclaimed property on behalf of owners who cannot be located. Common types of unclaimed property include money in bank accounts, stocks, dividends, matured insurance policies, and mineral royalty payments.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the California State Controller's Office - Special Investigations Bureau, the Sacramento Valley Hi-Tech Crimes Task Force, the United States Postal Inspection Service, the United States Secret Service - Reno, and the Nevada Attorney General's Office.

"We will go after anyone who commits fraud involving unclaimed property," said State Controller Steve Westly. "Enforcement of the law is critical to prevent fraud and protect Californians' unclaimed property."

GARNER was arrested based on a warrant issued after a federal grand jury in Sacramento, California, returned an indictment on January 29, 2004, charging him with four counts of mail fraud. According to Assistant United States Attorney Norman Wong, who is prosecuting the case, the indictment alleges that GARNER submitted claim forms to the California State Controller's Office for unclaimed mineral royalties that energy companies had deposited with the state. The claim forms were accompanied by fraudulent deeds which ostensibly transferred the mineral rights to GARNER. However, the deeds were forged, and GARNER had no right to collect the unclaimed royalties.

If convicted, the maximum penalty under federal law for each offense of mail fraud is five years of imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000, a three-year term of supervised release, and a special assessment of \$100.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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